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SOURCE B. E. I. P. I., Bulletin de l'Association d'Etudes et d'Informations Politiques Internationales, No 27, 1950.

#### COMMENTS ON HUNGARIAN AMNESTY DECREE

On the fifth anniversary of Hungary's liberation by the Red Army, the Hungarian government issued a decree of amnesty. The decree aroused great interest among the Hungarian emigres living in Paris.

Paragraph one of the decree guarantees amnesty to all who "were sentenced to one year in prison for political crimes committed prior to 4 April 1950." Apparently, persons who have been given such sentences are no longer in the Hungarian prisons. Paragraph six reduces by one-half all sentences of 10 years for crimes committed during the German occupation.

The amnesty does not apply to individuals who have been deprived of their citizenship. Persons who did not comply with an order to return to Hungary and have thus lost their citizenship are, therefore, excepted from the amnesty.

The Hungarian government apparently wishes to accomplish two principal aims with this decree. First, all governments behind the Iron Curtain are interested in weakening emigration centers in Western Europe and the US. Second, the Hungarian government believes that among the returning emigres there will be excellent propagandists who can be used against the Western democracies.

It is undeniable that the majority of the emigres are in a precarious situation. Because of unemployment, most of the Western countries issue but few labor permits to foreigners. Those emigres who elect to return to Hungary will, therefore, paint an unfavorable picture of life in the Western countries.

The Hungarian government is also speculating on weariness. Thousands of refugees have been moved from camp to camp and have lost hope of finding permanent employment. By returning to Hungary, these people hope to find work and a roof over their heads.

A Hungarian newspaperman made inquiries at the Hungarian legation in Paris regarding the details of repatriation. The legation employee who received him told him that no orders had been received as yet, but that special trains will

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probably be used. The newspaperman was also told that in Budapest a Stakhanovite earns from 1,000 to 2,000 forints a week and an unskilled laborer approximately 200 forints, the equivalent of 12,000 francs, and that on this sum one can live better than on 30,000 francs in France.

The most important liberal newspapers in Europe, as for example those of Switzerland, have published the appeals of the Hungarian legations and have commented favorably on the advantageous amnesty and details of the repatriation. None of these Western newspapers made any comment on the contradiction between the urgent appeal to return to Hungary and the fact that the frontiers of the country are hermetically sealed to those Hungarians who wish to leave it.

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